

584 Havik subdivisions. Similarly, Poleyā is a blanket term for anyone of the following Untouchable sub-castes, Kembatti, Aḍiyas, Pāleyā, Poleyā, Kukka Poleyā, Baḍaga Poleyā, and Mādiga. Pāleyas are split into further subdivisions.

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793 [778] The Brahmins, Kaniyas, and Bannas (or Paṇikas) are the three castes with whom Coorgs come into contact mostly in ritual contexts. The Brahmins are priests not only in the great shrines at [788] Tala Kāvēri, Bhāgamaṇḍla, and Irpu, but also in numerous small temples scattered all over Coorg. Coorgs from every part of Coorg go on pilgrimage to the great shrines, and at Bhāgamaṇḍla, where the Kāvēri and Kanakē meet, it is customary for them to offer balls of rice to their ancestors under the guidance of a Brahmin priest.

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437 In those villages where a Brahmin is functioning as priest he is paid annually, at harvest time, a certain quantity of paddy by every house in the village. In this respect he is treated like the barber, washerman, smith, and others. The priest is an essential member of the village organization.

In addition to being priest of the village temple, the Brahmin performs certain ritual services for Coorgs. These services vary from one part of Coorg to another, and not infrequently from one joint family to another: Coorgs in Kiggaṭnāḍ, for instance, are more Sanskritized in their ways than Coorgs elsewhere, and again some Coorg families are more Sanskritized than their neighbours. But everywhere the Brahmin priests perform certain minimum duties: at *putri*, the harvest festival of Coorgs, he comes with consecrated water which he gives the members to drink, and also sprinkles a little of it on certain parts of the house. When a wedding takes place in a Coorg house, he comes to bless the bridal pair and give them consecrated water.

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754 The formation and crystallization of the division of Amma Coorgs is itself an acknowledgement of the strength of the influence of the Brahmins on Coorgs. But the Brahmins do not always operate at the Sanskritic level. Nearly a hundred years ago Dr. Moegling wrote that Coorgs were greatly afraid of the Tantri Brahmins of South Canara.

The Coorgs have an extraordinary dread of the power of these men. They say that if one of the Tantri Brahmins be offended and curse a man he will lose his sight or hearing or even his life. It is enough, they believe, for one of the masters of the black art to say to a man, 'do you

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villagers on a ritual occasion. If the institution of caste has a tendency to lay stress on 'horizontal unity', the harvest festival tends to counterpoise it by stressing the unity of the village.

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VI

The nuclear unit of Coorg society is the *okka* or patrilineal joint family, and only the male members of an *okka* have any rights in the ancestral estate. Women born in the *okka* leave it on marriage, while the women who come into it by marriage have extremely limited rights in the ancestral estate. No woman may be head of an *okka*. A Coorg proverb says, 'a woman may not be the head of an *okka*, and a bitch may not be given a share of the game it helps to kill in a hunt'.¹

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Only sons can continue the *okka*. But when there are no sons, a daughter, or widow of a dead son is married in either the *okka parijé* or *makka parijé* way (see pp. 129-30), which has the effect of granting the children of either form of union membership of their mother's natal *okka*. If it is not possible to perpetuate the *okka* in either of these ways, a boy from another *okka* is adopted.

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There is a sexual division of labour, men generally doing the work outside the house while women do the work inside. The tasks done by men are in a vague way regarded as superior to those done by women. The men cultivate or supervise the cultivation of land by low-caste labourers. However, agriculture is not, and has never been, their sole occupation. The army has always attracted Coorgs, and nowadays educated Coorgs are to be found in every profession.

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Village-assemblies and *nād*-assemblies were formerly vigorous institutions and only men normally took part in them. The men went in annual caravans to Malabar, in the dry season, to sell their surplus rice and buy salt, jaggery, coconut, coconut oil, tobacco, and fish. They also had the privilege and duty of conducting the elaborate festivals of village-deities and calendar festivals such as the harvest festival.

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Coorg women's activities are on the whole confined to the house. They cook food for the twenty or thirty members of the *okka*. They look after the children and servants, the storing of food, the raising of pig and fowl, and so on. The younger women have to bring

¹ Even today at a collective hunt bitches are not entitled to any share in the meat of the hunted animal, while each of the dogs is given a share.

769 drawn. The descendants of the *X okka* who are looking on inter-
782 vene and stop the fight.

787 Sometimes the oracle, possessed by a particular ancestor, inquires into the state of the ancestral estate. He asks the members of the *okka* to take him to the paddy-fields, and he might even sharply criticize them for not paying sufficient attention to the ancestral estate. He might inquire after the welfare of the members of the *okka*. It is said that sometimes these oracles point out treasure troves.

The living members ask the oracle questions concerning the various matters affecting them. 'Will my child recover from illness?' 'Why is a son not born to me?' And so on.

Before a particular ancestor leaves him, the oracle goes to the ancestor-shrine, where one of his party sacrifices a fowl or pig. Liquor, parched rice, coconut, and plantains are all offered to the ancestor represented by the oracle. The latter eats the parched rice and drinks the liquor, after which the ancestor who is possessing him leaves him. He gets ready to impersonate the next ancestor named by the head of the *okka*.

The last ancestor to possess the oracle is the Founder, in whose honour the oracle wears the upper part of his *téré* equipment. A pig is usually sacrificed to the Founder. The head of the *okka* requests the Founder to bless the descendants.

[621] On the next morning the sacrificed animals are cooked and the entire village is invited to dinner. Thus an ancestor-propitiation is also an occasion for the expression of the solidarity of the village.

[437] The Banṇas get as their perquisites the heads of the animals sacrificed, provisions, some cooked meat, and also a little cash. This is in addition to the fixed amount of paddy they are paid annually at harvest. The Banṇas in a village serve the Coorg *okkas* in that village or *nāḍ* during ancestor-propitiations and other occasions when their services are required, and in return for this they receive a certain amount of paddy annually. The relationship between a Banṇa family and a Coorg *okka* has a certain continuity and members of the former are well acquainted with the history of the latter. The Banṇa family almost becomes the repository of the traditions and history of the Coorg *okkas* it serves.

The Banṇa oracle is identified with the ancestor who is possessing him, and his acts and words are considered to be the ancestor's acts and words. In fact, an oracle is always identified with the

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776 historical records. Contradictions occur quite frequently in them.
 17/ And it is also clear that they are Coorg attempts at 'explain-
 533 ing' the fact of the existence of a number of deities in the villages with which they deal. These various deities and their festivals are brought into relation with each other, and one of the deities made out to be the leader of the rest. In another song this leadership might be claimed for a different deity in a different village.

It is clear from these songs that not only do Coorg, Malabar, and South Canara share certain common cultural and ritual forms, but that some of these have come from Malabar and South Canara into Coorg. The fact that Tuḷu-speaking Brahmins from South Canara are priests at very many temples in Coorg, and that Coorgs had (and have) considerable respect for them, helped the spread of Tuḷu and Sanskritic cultural and ritual forms in Coorg. Similarly, the Kaṇiya (astrologer) and Baṇṇa and Paṇika were responsible for the spread of Malayālam and Sanskritic cultural and ritual forms in Coorg. This does not mean that Malayālam and Tuḷu areas do not have some cultural forms in common. Nor does it mean that the cultural and ritual forms found among Coorgs should always, or even in the majority of cases, be attributed to diffusion from without.

177 Formerly, Coorgs used to go to Malabar to learn medicine and magic, and such Coorgs, on their return, seem to have exercised considerable influence and power over their countrymen. The ancestor of the Ajjikuttira *okka*, Kaliyāṇaṇḍa Ponnappa (alias Ajjappa), and Chendappaṇḍa Kungu are all reputed to have learnt magic and medicine in Malabar, and after their death they became culture-heroes. It should be remembered in this connexion that formerly a few Coorgs from every village in south-west Coorg went annually in caravans to Malabar to sell their rice in exchange for goods which they wanted. These trade expeditions also resulted in the spread of cultural forms from one area to another.

776 A deity is commonly known by reference to the village in which he has a shrine. For instance, Pannangālatammé is the 'Mother of the village Pannangāla', Pālūrappa is the 'Father of the village Pālūr', Tumbémalédéra is the 'Lord of the Tumbé hill'; and so on. Even where a deity is referred to by his or her name, a prefix is usually added stating to which village the particular deity belongs: for instance, Povvedi of Ballatnāḍ is usually referred to as Ballatnāḍ Povvedi, Bhadrakālī of Kunda is referred to as Kundat Bhadrakālī,

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On the ninth afternoon the villagers go in state to the Bhadrakālī temple, accompanied by the three 'horses'.¹ The latter run round the inner shrine thrice. After this is over, Coorg men dance the 'torch dance' (*bolakāt*)—actually they hold in their hands swords (*kaḍatalés*) or *chauris* (yak-tail whisks). Four Coorg drummers stand in the centre of the circle formed by the dancers, beating their small drums. As they beat the drums they sing the Bhadrakālī song. The outer circle of dancers do not, however, sing this song, but a different one which consists mostly of the names of deities interspersed with short interjections such as 'ho!', 'ha!', and 'he!': people dancing the torch dance always sing such a song.

After the dance is over, the Brahmin priests treat the Coorg devotees to coffee, and a dish made of parched rice mixed with jaggery and grated coconut. Coorgs sit on the steps all round the shrine and the Brahmins serve them, taking care, however, not to touch them. Only the priests may enter the kitchen or the inner shrine.²

The Poleyas who stand outside the temple compound then light reed torches in honour of one of *their* deities. They frequently shake the torches and this sends forth a shower of sparks. This is called *tūd nammé* (torch festival). They then let fly twenty-five chickens which perch on the roof of the temple compound. The upper-caste people who are inside the temple now climb up the roofs and catch the chickens, which belong to those who catch them.

The Poleya is normally the servant of the Coorg. He works for his master in the latter's field and house, and in return for this he is paid in paddy and straw annually. Usually the Poleya, like the Brahmin, is the receiver of goods from the Coorg. [437]•

At the Kundat Bhadrakālī festival the live chickens offered by Poleyas ultimately reach their Coorg masters. It is like a gift by Poleyas as a caste to Coorgs as a caste, and such a gift emphasizes inter-caste solidarity. Caste has a natural tendency to stress

¹ Any other *okkas* which have vowed to make offerings of 'horses' also join the procession.

² The Brahmins usually receive material goods in exchange for the ritual services they perform. Every *okkā* in the village annually gives the local Brahmins a certain amount of paddy and straw during harvest. This is in addition to payments for specific services. During the festival the Brahmin gives the members of the village some cooked food which has been earlier consecrated by being offered to the deity. [793] [437]

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other Coorgs he is a vegetarian and teetotaler. People respect him greatly for his piety. He is frequently contrasted with other oracles, who, in their day-to-day lives, are neither conspicuously pious nor virtuous. 791
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Poleyas may not enter the temple of Bhadrakālī. Images and representations of their deities are placed on an improvised platform outside the temple compound. The Poleyas dance before this platform.

Some of the duties performed by the Poleyas, however, require them to exercise power over people belonging to the higher castes, and this has the effect of compensating them for the low position they normally occupy in the caste structure. The Poleyas dance before their deities have the power to spot any stranger trying to enter the temple. They also exorcise evil spirits from possessed persons who may frequently belong to a high caste. [289]

Votive animals are brought on the tenth day to Bhadrakālī mostly by the members of the high castes. A few of these are allotted to the Poleyas by the oracle of Bhadrakālī. While half of each decapitated animal before Bhadrakālī is shared by *okkas* belonging to the high castes in Kuklūr, the animals decapitated before Poleyas deities are not so shared. The Poleyas share among themselves the animals decapitated before their deities. The allotment of some of the animals brought by members of the high castes to the Poleyas deities constitutes a gift by the high castes to Poleyas. This might be regarded as a return gift for the twenty-five chickens which were 'given' on the ninth day by the Poleyas to the high-caste people. [437]

The position of the Poleyas varies from festival to festival. In some festivals the exclusion aspect seems to be stressed to the neglect of other aspects, whereas in certain others, along with the exclusion-aspect, the solidarity-aspect and the compensation-aspect are all stressed, but with the first mentioned predominating over the others.

VIII

The village is a social unit of considerable strength, and this is in spite of the fact that caste-ties are always tending to stretch beyond the village (and even *nāḍ*). A village is a multi-caste association and the unity of the village always demands that caste-ties (2)

137 card cases, paper cutters, fans, walking sticks, etc. which are
 313 made chiefly in Nuggur and North Canara. Sandal-wood is
 322 also a Government monopoly and is collected at an expense
 655 of one eighth of the value of the wood, trees when from 16
 to 40 years old according to the nature of the soil, where
 grown, are cut down; the best yield a billet of 5 inches square
 and 4 or 5 feet long. The wood fetches at the public auctions
 652 periodically held by Government at the coties or wood-stores,
 437 from 70 to 98 Rupees per candy of 550 avoirdupois, and is
 439 generally exported to Bombay. Natives distinguish 3 kinds
 according to colour: the "red sandal" (*sriganda*) which is the
 most highly scented, the "yellow sandal" (*arasana ganda*), and
 the "white sandal" (*bili ganda*) which possesses but a faint
 314 aroma and is least prized. The chips are burnt as perfume,
 302 or reduced to powder which enters into the composition for
 303 marking the foreheads of natives. The roots, containing the
 greatest amount of the essential oil, are chiefly used for its
 production. It is heavier than water and yields an excellent
 245 perfume. The sandal tree is propagated from seed and suc-
 kers, springing up from the roots.

137 A stately though not very valuable tree all over these
 313 parts of the country is the *Wild Mango tree*, which towers with
 its lofty crown far above its humbler neighbours. But the
 giant of these jungles is the *Ajini* or *Wild Jack tree* (*Artocarpus hirsuta*); the timber of which is most useful for house
 and ship building. The rosy-tinted, smooth-barked *Ben-teak*
 or *Nandi* (*Lagerstroemia parviflora*) is reputed for its excel-
 lent timber.

137 A splendid jungle tree, when in flower in February and
 314 March, is the *Red Cotton tree* or *Bombax Malabaricum* a very
 large specimen, stands in front of the Anandapur Mission
 Church. Its flowers are large and of a deep red colour, and
 the many seeded capsules contain a silky cotton, which is
 employed for stuffing pillows and mattresses. The staple is

632 of the former fort. It was a happy thought to select this
[485] spot for a travellers' bangalow, where after a weary journey
over the monotonous Mysore-roads the traveller is placed in
the midst of a charming scenery, a worthy introduction into
Coorg!

[132] From the position of Fraserpet its climate is hotter than
that of Mercara, but during the monsoon it is extremely
pleasant, as very little rain falls there and the heat of the sun
is moderated by constant clouds and light fogs. The nights
are cool and pleasant, nor is the sun ever very oppressive at
any season, except for an hour or two at midday; after the
monsoon, however, and especially after considerable inundations
by the Kávéri, the place becomes feverish and is not
inhabited by Europeans.

[162] The town was named "Fraserpet" in honor of General
[361] Fraser, the first Commissioner of Coorg. It contains now
326 houses, mostly tiled, and a population of 1,213 souls, of
whom 360 are Christians, 388 Mussulmans and 465 Hindus.

[368] The town can boast of a Roman Catholic Church, a newly
built shrine, dedicated to Ganapati, with a very useful public
well in front of it, an Anglo-Vernacular School, a native rest-
house with a tank and a Government wood-yard, besides the
[795] European bangalows. The Roman Catholics are mostly native
or East Indian pensioned soldiers and their families, a detach-
ment of Sappers and Miners having been stationed there
when employed in making the great road to Mercara and the
bridge over the Kávéri.

[131] Sémanodrpét in Yedavanád is 26½ miles to the north of
Mercara and of the same elevation. It lies on the highroad
[362] to Manjerabad, but there is nothing remarkable connected
[162] with the Petta. Of its 197 houses 19 are tiled and 178
[241] thatched. Of the 953 inhabitants 862 are Hindus and 91
● [437] Mussulmans. There are but few cultivators, most of them
live on trade in various articles. Though fully alive to their